

A true and impartial

NARRATIVE

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Some *Illegal* and *Arbitrary* proceedings
by certain Justices of the Peace and
others, against several innocent and
peaceable *Nonconformists* in and near
the Town of *Bedford*, upon pretence
of putting in execution the late Act
against *Conventicles*.

TOGETHER

With a brief Account of the late sudden and
strange Death of the Grand Informer, and
one of the most violent malicious Prosecutors
against these poor people.

Published for general Information.

— They which hate us, spoil for themselves. Pl. 44. 10.

— As deceivers, and yet true, &c. As poor, yet making many rich;
as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9, 10.

— And took joyfully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing in your
selves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance.
Heb. 10. 34.

Printed in the year, 1670.

NARRATIVE

Some of the most interesting proceedings
by certain officers of the State and
of the State of New York, in the
proceedings of the State of New York,
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S I R,

Some proceedings at Bedford, pursuant to the late Act of Parliament, (a true Narrative whereof is herein enclosed) afford matter both of wonder and dislike to such that have observed them. When you have perused the Paper, you will conclude with me and others, that this Text needs no Comment; it is plain, that in despite of Magna Charta, and in defiance to all Laws and Rules of Righteousness, Neighbourhood and Humanity, they resolve to ruine the Nonconformists, though the Instruments are no wayes able to recompence the King and Kingdoms damage thereby. The Sufferers are thearful and peaceable; their immediate Persecutors are the scum of the people, and chiefly the appurtenants of the Commissaries Court. The most forward Instrument of that sort is one that hath openly avowed and declared his esteem for Popery above other Religions. If some check be not given to these Extravagancies, many Families will suddenly be ruined, and the publique Trade and Welfare endangered, which the Interest of some, the Rage, Revenge and Enmity of others will not admit regard to. Pardon this trouble, when I have told you the particulars of the Narrative are all true, and will be proved in every part. So I have remaining at present only to tell you, I am, Sir,

Your assured Friend.

The NARRATIVE.

ON Lords-day (May 15.) at the dwelling-house of one John Fen, a Haberdasher of Hatts, many persons being assembled for Religious Exercise; One West and Feckman (two Apparitors) by a Warrant from one Mr. Foster, who is a Justice of Peace, and the Commissaries Deputy, did enter the House, and force the Meeters to Mr. Fosters House, who fined every one of them severally, according to their reputed abilities; and committed the Preacher to Prison, for words he spake against the Church of England, then occasioned by the discourse of Mr. Foster. The Apparitors charged (by vertue of their Warrant) a Constable, and a Churchwarden, to assist them; but they neglecting, (being not willing to the work, as they themselves declared) were fined each of them five pounds; though by intercession of friends, the Fines are not yet levied.

On Friday following, one *Thomas Battison* another Churchwarden; and the most active and busie in the work, having with much labour and difficulty called together the Overseers of the Poor, and the Constables of the several Wards, to levy the several Fines upon the Goods of the Meeters, did first attempt to levy the Fine of Ten pounds upon the Goods of one *John Bardolf* a Maltster, who having sold all his Malt before the Act commenced, and delivered his Malt and Malt-house into his possession to whom he had sold them, none of the Officers would joyn with *Battison* to break open the Door of the Malt-house, or to distrain the Malt, though he most importunately charged and besought them to do it, promising to bear them harmless.

Whilst *Battison* and the other Officers were debating in the open Yard before the Malthouse Door, a great number of all sorts of persons were gathered about them, expressing (by turns) their indignation against him, for attempting this against *Bardolf*; whom the whole Town knew to be a just and harmless man; and the common sort of people covertly fixing a Calves tayl to *Battisons* back, and deriding him with shouts and hollows, he departed without taking any distress there; and advanced with other Officers to *Edward Covingtons* Shop, a Grocer, to levy five shillings, for his Wife being at the Meeting, where none of the Officers would distrein but *Battison*, who took a Brass Kettle, but when he had brought it to the street-door, none of the Officers would carry it away; neither could he hire any to do it in two hours time, though he offered money to such needy persons among the company as wanted bread; At last he got a youth for sixpence to carry the Kettle less way than a Stones-throw, to an Inn-yard where before he had hired a Room to lodge such Goods, under pretence to lodge Grain: but when the Youth had carried the Kettle to the Inn-gate, (being hooted at all the way by the common Spectators) the Inn-keeper would not suffer the Kettle to be brought into his Yard; and so his man set it out in the middle of the street, None regarding it, till towards night a poor woman that receiveth alms was caused by an Overseer to carry it away.

From hence, *Battison*, with the rest of the Officers at his heels, proceeds to distrein one *John Spencer* a Grocer, for a Fine of Forty shillings; but his Shop-door being lockt, *Battison* could not prevail with the Officers to joyn with him in breaking it open: and so this day ended, without any other distress than that of the Kettle.

The next day, which was the Market-day, the Justices understanding how *Battison* was discouraged in his work by the backwardness of the other Officers, and the open discountenance of the other people,

ple, commanded the Officers to break open the Doors, and levy the Distressers, and promised them to bear them harmless: Immediately old *Battison*, with a file of Soldiers and the Constables, in the middle of Market-time advanced again to the Malt-house of *John Bardolfe*, (situate in an Inn-yard in the middle of the Market-place) and breaks open the Doors, but not without long time and trouble, all people refusing to lend either Bars or Hammers, which they sent from place to place to borrow for that purpose: When the Doors were broken open, *Battison* distreyned fourteen Quarters of Malt, but it was night before he could carry them away; for though the Market-place was then full of Porters (it being a great Corn-Market) yet none of them would assist, though charged strictly by *Battison* and the Constables, but ran all away, and left their Fares; some of them saying, *they would be hang'd drawn and quarter'd before they would assist in that work*; for which cause the Justices committed two of them (which they could take) to the Gaol.

The next day, being *Lords-Day*, Fines were doubled upon the Meeters, before the first could be levied; for they assembling again at the same House, according to their custom; *Battison* with the two Apparitors, by another Warrant from Mr. *Foster*, entred the Meeting-place about nine of the clock in the morning: but the Meeters refusing to depart before their Exercise was ended (unless forced) *Battison* sends word of it to Mr. *Foster*, who returns a verbal Order, that *Battison* should charge certain Gentlemen of the Town (whose names he had sent by the messenger) to assist him; which *Battison* accordingly did, going to their Houses to call them, though there were near a hundred common people spectators in the streets, and none of them then charged to assist, and also Trained-Band Souldiers ready in Town for this service, partly at the charge of these Gentlemen whom *Battison* had so warned to assist, and who were so warned (as is supposed) upon design, to have them incur the penalties of five pounds for their refusing. About ten of the clock in the morning the Meeters went with *Battison* and the Apparitors (being constrained so to do) to the *Swan in Bedford*, where being kept till four of the clock in the afternoon, and their names taken by the Justices, they were set at liberty.

Next morning Mr. *Foster* the Justice appears early in the streets, with old *Battison* and the two Apparitors, a file of Souldiers and some Constables, to see the Fines levied upon the Meeters Goods; charging to his assistance such persons he sees, and sending for others to their houses, but got few or none besides his first company; most of
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the Tradesmen, Journey-men, Labourers and Servants having either left the Town, or hid themselves, to avoid his call. The Town was so thin of people, that it looked more like a Country Village than a Corporation; and the Shops being generally shut down, it seemed like a place visited with the Pest, where usually is written upon the Door, *Lord have mercy upon us!*

The first Distress was attempted upon the Goods of one *Nicholas Hawkins* a Cutler, who was fined forty shillings; but his Goods being removed beforehand, and his House visited with the Small-Pox, the Officers declined entering. Mr. *Foster* meeting here one *John Craker* (that was also fined three pounds) commanded his assistance; who refusing, was therefore by Mr. *Foster* commanded into the custody of one of the Town-Sergeants, then present.

From hence Mr. *Foster* went into the House of one *Michael Shephard* a Shoemaker, who was fined five shillings; where a Distress was made, not only for five shillings, but also for 12 d. more; because the said *Shephard* being asked the same time by Mr. *Foster*, if he was at Church the day before? and not answering, only desired to know who accused him, or would swear it.

The next House in their way was one *Thomas Honyloves*, a Journey-man-Shoemaker, fined twenty shillings or more; whose Children lying sick of the Small-pox, in the House where his Goods lay, the Officers were unwilling to enter, and so Mr. *Foster* drew them off to one *Thomas Compers* a Heelmaker, fined forty shillings; distreyning three Cart-load of Wood, cut especially for his working; which was of more value than any of his household Goods, he being a poor man, and living only upon making Heels and Lasts.

The next remove was to one *John Crokers* House before mentioned, a Dealer in Linen Drapery, and fined three pounds; who having removed his Shop-Goods to another place, to secure them from the Distress, old *Battison* would not trouble himself to distress then, but said he would take a better opportunity to get his Goods.

Near this place lived one *Daniel Rich*, a Tanner, and Constable of that Ward; who being fined five shillings for his Wife, had his best Wearing-Coat distreyned the same time, by immediate Order of Mr. *Foster*.

From hence Mr. *Foster* marcheth to *John Spencer*, a Grocer; whose Goods he distreyned for a Fine of about forty shillings. The next Neighbour was *William Jay*, a Baker, who was also distreyned for five shillings. And next to him lived one *Edward Isaac*, a Blacksmith, fined forty shillings for himself and his Wife; from whom they took
away

away Locks; Shovels, and the very Anvil upon which he forgeth his Work; and *Battison* would have pulled down the Forge-Bellows also, but that it required more time and labour, than his itch to greater prizes in other places would allow him: Hastening therefore to their Market, they leave (for a time) the Parish of *Pauls*, invading the Parish of *Cuthberts*; where they find the door of one *Thomas Arthur* a Pipe-maker, locked, who was fined five pounds; before they had broken the door open by attempts they made at it, the same was unlocked on the in-side; Mr. *Foster* enters, and distreyning all the Goods within doors and without, the said *Arthur* desired to know, how much Money he had distreyned for? to whom the said Mr. *Foster* replied, that they distreyned for eleven pounds: thereupon *Thomas Arthur* desired to see the Warrant; which being produced, he seeing himself therein but six pound, told Mr. *Foster* so: to which Mr. *Foster* answered, that there was five pound more for keeping his Door locked. When *Thomas Arthur* perceived that Mr. *Foster* would distreyn all his Goods; he said, Sir, What shall my Children do, shall they starve? Mr. *Foster* replied, that so long as he was a Rebel, his Children should starve. And so on Wednesday following, old *Battison*, the two Apparitors, with a File of Musquetiers, and a Cart, carried away what Household Goods they thought fit, and all the Wood both within doors and without, necessary to his Trade, by three Cart-load, not leaving so much as to suffice for the burning of a Kiln of Pipes, ready set, though earnestly desired by the poor Pipemaker himself, and also by others of *Battisons* Company. Mr. *Foster* having done his Work at the Pipemakers, proceeds in the Parish to one *Robert Browns* a Gardener, distreyning all his Household Goods, for a Fine supposed to be three pounds: making haste to the chiefest place they aimed at, for their turn, they passed into *Peters* Parish, to the House of Mrs. *Mary Tilney*, Widow, a Gentlewoman well descended, and of a good Estate, who was fined Twenty pounds; and to make her exemplary in suffering for that offence, Mr. *Foster* himself, being attended by his Publick Notary, will see the Fine effectually levied upon her Goods; and indeed the same was effectually done; for (a Cart being provided for that purpose) they distreyned and carried away all the Goods in her House they thought worth their labour, as Tables, Cupboards, Chairs, Irons, Feather-beds, Blankets, the very Hangings of the Room, and the Sheets off her Bed, insomuch that the Widow was forced that night to borrow Sheets of her Neighbours to lie in; being not willing to lodge out of her own House, though invited by her friendly Neighbours; nor did they leave her one Featherbed of her own (having taken

taken three away) whereon to spread those Sheets she borrowed, but she was forced to make use of a Bed and Bolster of anothers, left in her House: It is true the Gentlewoman had more good Household-stuff of her own, than was at this time found in her House; but foreseeing the Waste intended upon her, prudently secured the best of them abroad; and therefore cannot with safety possess them for her necessary use: And as for the value of those Goods taken away, it is supposed to be betwixt forty and fifty pounds. Yet the said *Mrs Tilney* was more troubled at the crying and sighing of her poor Neighbours about her, (who were much affected with her sufferings, she being very charitable) than for the loss of her Goods, which she took very chearfully. And so the Officers left her, having finished this dayes work.

The next day, being Tuesday, more Fines were to be levied on the Goods of the rest of the Meerers; but *Battison* finding it would lie hard upon him and the two Apparitors, for want of more help than they had the day before; and fore-knowing that if he deferred charging Assistance till he began his work, all people would get out of the way, as they did; Therefore early in the morning he walked alone in the Streets, looking into the Shops, to charge men beforehand to be ready: Which being soon perceived by the people, most of the Tradesmen and other Inhabitants, instantly either deserted the Town, or hid themselves as before. About ten of the Clock, old *Battison*, with the Souldiers, and some Constables, whom he had warned over-night to be in readines, marcheth up the High-street; where he levieth the Fine of five pounds upon *John Fen*, the Haberdasher of Hatts before-mentioned, at whose House the Meeting was; taking away all the Hatts in his Shop, and the next day carted away his Household-Goods, because there was but twenty nine Hatts in the Shop, beside Hatbands, that they took away. Having thus dealt with this Hatter, he proceeds to deal the same measure to another Hatter, one *Samuel Fen*, who was also fined five pounds, and dealt with as his Brother before him, finding no more favour from them than the former.

The next Fine they proceed to levy, was forty shillings upon the Goods of one *Thomas Woodward*, a Maltster: but one *Richard Layfield* being in possession of the Malthouse, to whom the Maltster had (some time before) sold all his Malt, and quitted the possession; Old *Battison* met with a stop, and was perswaded to defer distreyning, till *Richard Layfield*, who had bought the Malt, had spoken with the Justices, then met at the *Swan*: forthwith the said *Layfield* applied to the Justices, acquaints them that *Thomas Woodward* (*bona fide*) did owe him sixty pounds,

pounds, that he had formerly lent him in money, and that the said *Thomas Woodward* was bound to deliver two hundred ninety odd quarters of Malt to others, for Money and Barley received of them; and therefore upon condition that the said *Layfield* should acquit him of the said sixty pound debt, and oblige himself to deliver the two hundred ninety odd quarters of Malt to the several persons interested in them, he did sell and deliver to him the said *Richard Layfield*, all the Malt lying in his Malthouse, and Barley left, and that there was no fraud herein; All the persons to whom the two hundred ninety and odd quarters of Malt were due, were ready to make oath of the truth of their Debts; the said *Richard Layfield* did also produce the Deed to the Justices, and avetred that the reason of making this Bargain, was to secure his sixty pound, which he thought might otherwise be hazarded. But notwithstanding all this, Sir *George Blundell*, one of the Justices, said; That *Richard Layfield* went about herein to defraud the King, and therefore bound him over to the next Assizes; and further said, that so long as *Thomas Woodward* aforesaid offended, the Malt should be distreyned, and that he would leave them (meaning the *Menters*) worth nothing; And when he had done that, he would fill the Pisons with them: adding moreover, If they do not like it, *Let them stand up and defend themselves, as we did.*

There were no further Distresses made the last week; it is conjectured that some falling out betwixt the Mayor and *Mr. Foster* on Wednesday, was the occasion to delay their proceedings; It seems the Mayor was not willing that *Battison* (who is Churchwarden for *Pauls*) should distrein in the two Parishes on the other side of the River where the Mayor lived: But on Monday the 30th instant, *Feckman* the chief Apparitor, with the Churchwarden, Constable, and Overseer of *Mary's Parish* in *Bedford*, began to distrein. The persons name is *Joseph Ruffhead* at whose House they first began; the Fine they levied upon him was three pound; the said *Ruffhead* upon their approach to him desired to see their Warrant, wherein not finding *Feckmans* name, he discharged him from coming upon his Ground, and therefore was had to one of the Justices; before whom making good his practice in keeping *Feckman* from his Ground, because not in the Warrant, was told by the Justice, that *Feckman* came only as an Assistant to the Officers. Whereupon the said *Ruffhead* returning back permitted them to take their Distress; who took two Timber-Trees of about seven pound. value, for the three pound. The same

day the same Officers went to distreyn one *John Clarke*, a Grocer, for forty shillings; and breaking open his Doors, they took his Household-goods, not meddling with those in his Shop, being but of little value. And from thence the same Officers went to the House of *John Rush Waggoner*, to levy a Distress of three pounds set upon him, where they seized a new Cart and Wheels for the same.

The same day at part of a Village called *Cotten-End*, near *Bedford*, the Officers of the same, by Warrant from the Justices, distreyned several persons, who had been convicted by the Justices, for having a Meeting at the House of one *Thomas Thorowgood*; which persons were fined to a greater value than the whole of their Estates did amount to; and this day they are stripped of their whole substance; and the said *Thorowgood* hath not left him so much as his Loom to work with, being a Weaver; and by his labour therein supporting himself and his Family.

But because there are several remarkable Circumstances relating to this matter, which do clearly evince the undue and most inhumane dealings of some of the Justices, especially of *Sir George Blundell*, with the poor people last mentioned; here is therefore inserted a particular and exact Account of the whole Proceeding, as followeth.

From the discourse of a little Child, who said there had been a Meeting at the House of *Thomas Thorowgood* in *Cotten-End*; the Wife of *John Pryor* Victualler, resorts to *Sir G. B.* and makes Oath of the Child's Report to her, who issues a Warrant for the appearance of several persons of that Enclish, suspected to have been there, who appeared before several Justices at the *Swan* in *Bedford*, before whom none that were examined confessed a Meeting to have been, or that they were there: the Justices dealt with them severally, assuring them that such of them as would confess who was the Preacher, should be acquitted: but no confession was made; and generally they did refer to any proof that could be brought against them, not being willing to accuse themselves or others. The Justices upon consideration did conclude, that there was ground sufficient to convict them; and did assess Fines upon them severally. *Thomas Thorowgood's* Fine (at whose House the Meeting was said to be) was Nineteen pounds; who was by the Officers distreyned, and all that he had, with the Implements of his Trade (he being a Weaver) taken from him, and the said *Thorowgood* with his Wife is since departed away from their dwelling and gone.

The Wife of one *George Winright*, and a Son-in-law of *Winright*, were fined ten pounds five shillings, as having been at the Meeting. The said *George Winright* is Tenant to the Earl of *Exeter*, and being in Arrears of Rent to his said Landlord, about *Michelmas* last, for his said Landlord's security of receiving Rent then due, and such fursher as for the year ensuing would be accrewing, the said *Winright* prevailed with two Sons-in-law of his, to become bound for him to the Earl's Steward, then upon the place, for his quarterly payment of money due; and for the indemnity of his two Sons, in respect of the said Bond, the said *Winright* by Bill of Sale passeth over all his Goods and Chattels to the two Sons, one whereof lived with him, in the possession of what was so sold, from the time of the said Sale; but it happened that the Son who lived with him, staying out from home at a Fair the third of *May*, kept at a Village about two miles from *Cotten-end*, the Father-in-law took such displeasure that he broke open the Son's Coffer standing in the House, took out the Writing and destroyed it: the Son remains still with his Father, and was fined ten pounds for being at a Meeting. The Father pleads there were no Goods of the Son's there, though they were once his with his Brothers, yet the Writing was since destroyed, and sets forth the matter of Fact. The cancelling of the Writing was deemed Collusion, and the Officers were ordered to proceed in the Distress. *Winright* thereupon driveth away his Cattell, sells several of them at *Potten Market*, and some not sold there, he sells to one *Miller*, an Inhabitant of the same Parish, for a valuable rate; who paid good part of the money, and gave Bond for the remainder to *Winright* (the said Cattell being in *Miller's* Grounds and Possession several dayes) which being heard of, Sir *G. B.* sends a Warrant for both the Buyer and Seller to appear before him, to whom they gave information of the sale and the payment. But all their Pleas being unregarded, the said Knight demanded Sureties of them for their appearance at the Assizes, declaring with his wonted vehemence he would bind them both over, and distress the Cattell likewise: whereat the said *Winright*, being affrighted, promised to pay the ten pounds, and accordingly did so; but some few dayes after, being told by a Lawyer that he had wrong in so doing, he repairs to Sir *G. B.* acquainting him with what the Lawyer had said, entreating his favour: which without delay he imparted, beating him well for his pains.

Thomas Langley, an Inhabitant of *Cotten-End*, likewise being fined five pound ten shillings, for his being at the afore-said suspected

Meeting, presuming upon the favour of Sir G. B. (to whom he stood in late relation as a Servant) told the Officers *he would pay the money, if he could not get abatement of Sir G. B. to whom repaying, and not pre-
vailing for any such-like kindness, he was unwilling to pay the said
Fine, having very little Stock, and owing for the greatest part of
that, and much likewise in arrears to his Landlord: but the Officers
having strict charge to go take all he had, and sell it for five pounds
ten shillings, they distreyned his three Cows, really worth ten pounds,
and going to sell them, a Neighbour in compassion to the Distreyned,
paid the Officer five pound ten shillings, and sent the Cows home to
the right owner.*

Some other persons of the said Endship were distreyned by the Officers, and had that little substance they had taken from them, and deposited by the Officers in the house of the *fore said Pryor*, whose Wife did at first inform of the said Meeting, where they yet remain to be sold to any willing to buy the same, that with the proposition allotted to the Informer, the said *Pryor* may again have some money to put into his purse, having prodigally and brutishly wasted all, that he lately sold a considerable Estate for, that lay in the *fore said Endship*.

*A true Relation of the sudden and strange Death of one Feckman, a
malicious Persecutor of the good People at Bedford.*

Of a like complexion with that beastly creature *John Pryor*, last mentioned, was one *Feckman* a most violent and thirsty Persecutor at *Bedford*; whose father living at *Turvy* in the County of *Bedford*, left him a very considerable Estate, who at his marriage did receive a good addition thereto, by a Portion with his Wife; but giving no limits to his lusts and extravagancies, in some few years he had spent all, and for his last refuge became an *Apparitor*, to which the calling of an Alehouse-keeper being by special favour added, he by the gains from both was enabled to live as a House-keeper in *Bedford*; but at the coming forth of this late Act, he blessed himself with the hopes of recovering an Estate, and raising himself a Fabrick out of the Ruines of those whose kindnesses had refreshed him; and pursuant to this purpose, he engages with all his might both in taking the *Masters*, and levying the Distress upon their Goods; in the former, manifesting more than usual diligence; and in the latter, expressing extraordinary rage and violence, so that by his fierceness and cruelty

elty (wherein he seemed delighted) he appeared rather a Putveyor for, and a resemblance of Satan, than an Officer of a Court Christian (as some men stile the Commisſaries.) But ſome few dayes after, viz. June 3. 1670. at a Viſitation (where he, as a neceſſary and endeared Appurtenant, was attending) at *Amphill*, he was taken there ill, and coming thence to his home, fell very far amiſs, iſſuing blood in great abundance both by vomit and ſeige, continuing ſo to do till his death (which was the 5th day after his fiſt ſickneſs) during all which time he was in very great pain and anguiſh of body, and for the moſt part unwilling to ſpeak, and not very ſenſible, ſometimes ſpeaking words of threatening againſt *Phanaſticks*; and ſometimes blaming *Mr. Foſter* for ſetting him in the Office. After whoſe Death his Wife, in compliance with her Huſbands deſire of being buried at *Turvey*, endeavoured to borrow a Coach of the Neighbour Gentlemen, to carry his Corps; but all that were asked, reſuſed to lend; and the two Carriers who live in the Town (each of which keeps two Coaches, that they let for Hire to perſons deſiring them) did both of them reſuſe for hire to let theirs for his conveyance; ſo that his wife was conſtrained to ſend his Corps in a Cart to the place deſigned for his burial.

A P O S T S C R I P T.

THis Inſtance of the Execution of the late Act againſt Meetings for Religious Worſhip, is not thus made publick, as though there were no other of the ſame kind in other places; For it is well known that in many of the principal Cities and Towns in the Nation, there have been proceedings on the ſame account, with no leſs Outrage, Illegality and Violence; which may in due time be publiſhed alſo: only this is one of the fiſt, whoſe Tragical Acts have been collected, every particular whereof will readily be attesteſt on Oath, by thoſe that ſuffered, and others who were ſpectators of the whole proceeding. Nor is the deſign of publiſhing hereof, to caſt any reflection on the Act it ſelf, let it ſtand or fall in the Providence of God, as it ſhall be found compliant with, or oppoſite to, the Honour and Interest of his *Majeſty*, with the Peace, Welfare and Proſperity of the Kingdoms. Councils for publick good, are the Province of our Superiours; ready Obedience, or peaceable Sufferings,

ings, are the lot of private men : But least of all is there any design in this *Narrative*, to insinuate further discomposures into the minds of men than what are already evident, or to attempt a disposal of them, into irregular, and disorderly actions, to the disturbance of the Publick Peace : This indeed (as it appears in the *Narrative*) some of their Adversaries do openly declare, that they would willingly, by their unjust and oppressive usage of them, hurry them into. But all endeavours of that kind will be in vain, and the hopes of some about it, wholly frustrate. For as this People, by their peaceable deportment for many years together, have given all the satisfaction, that any men in the like circumstances are able to give, of their harmless and quiet inclinations ; So they intend not (by the Grace of God) to gratifie their Adversaries, by transgressing the obligation of their own Consciences unto peace, and all due subjection unto Magistrates. It is nothing else but the Authority of God in their Consciences, which imposes a necessity upon them to practise those things in their Christian Profession for which they are made obnoxious to so great sufferings, and gives them a supportment under them. The violation thereof, by any disorderly and seditious behaviour, to the disturbance of the Publick Peace, would be at once, to renounce the Principle of their Actions, and to deprive themselves of the Comfort of their Sufferings. Nor do they in the least suspect, that the Declaration of their Resolutions in this kind, will prompt many to renew and multiply their violent proceedings against them, upon security of freedom from opposition ; None but vile and ignoble spirits will entertain a thought of so doing, upon such grounds ; Wise and generous Persons will rather take hold of it, as a fit and honourable occasion, to exercise their clemency and forbearance. And indeed all unquiet storms, thundrings and lightnings, are in and from the lower Regions ; but amongst the higher Spheres and more Celestial Bodies, all things are always peaceable and serene, and by their influences are the other raging and noxious disturbances quell'd and scattered : and such an end do we hope and pray for, of our present disquietments.

The ends therefore of publishing this Account are plainly and only these : First, to prepare others, of the same way and practice in the things of Religion, with the persons so roughly treated at *Bradford*, not to think strange of the like trials when they befall them, and to bear them patiently, quietly, and peaceably, notwithstanding all provocations to the contrary, as they have done. Secondly, Humbly to demand

of our Legislators, whether this be the Garment of their Off-spring? It doth not appear that there is any thing in the Act it self, that doth direct to, or will bear any man out in, such an execution of it, as that which is here most truly and impartially represented. And we suppose that the secret intentions of some, ought not to influence Public Administrations, wherein all are concerned. And it may not unbecome the wisdom of those who have Power, speedily to revise those Laws, which may easily be perverted, so as to give too much countenance unto, and be made instrumental in, gratifying the lusts and revenge of private men. 3dly, To give a clear prospect into the sad Effects of the Prosecution of this Act, in the way and manner as hath herein been made known; in which it appears, that there hath been very little regard to Law, Equity, Peace, Love, Humanity, or indeed any thing that is desirable or useful among Mankind. It is evident already, how that by these means, no small Disturbances, Distractions and Confusions, have filled the minds, and exercised the thoughts of all sorts of men; some forsake their Callings, and all industry in them; in which number are not only the Prosecutors of this Act, and those prosecuted by them, but others also, who withdraw themselves, or forsake their Habitations, that they may have no concernment in these proceedings, or at least not to contribute their Assistance in them. Poor industrious Families are utterly ruined, and some made wholly incapable to provide for their future subsistence, (the Utensils and Implements of their respective Callings (contrary to Law) being most barbarously taken from them:) And besides all this, opportunities are hereby given to Thieves and Robbers to countenance their Villanies, with pretences of executing this Act, which have actually by some already been made use of in *Hartfordshire*, not far from the Town of *Hartford*; the truth whereof will evidently appear upon enquiry. Moreover, also, the minds of the residue of men are filled with mutual Animosities, Heats, Jealousies and Suspitions, things no way conducing to publick tranquillity and advantage, And all this is brought about by this only means; And that too in a time otherwise of the highest peace, calmness, and sedateness of mind amongst all sorts of people throughout the Nation. Whether these, and innumerable other evils of the like kind, will be recompenced unto the Kingdom, by the satisfaction given to the envy and jealousies of some men, (whose usefulness unto themselves is very well known, but not so as to the Publick advantage of the Nation) Men wise, peaceable and sober, will in their own minds judge and determine.